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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BRATISLAVA 000521

SIPDIS

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NSC FOR DAMON WILSON

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/27/2021

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [KDEM](#) [SOCI](#) [LO](#)

SUBJECT: FICO DOESN'T RULE OUT WORKING WITH SLOTA AND MECIAR

REF: A. BRATISLAVA 513

[1](#)B. BRATISLAVA 506

[1](#)C. BRATISLAVA 499

[1](#)D. BRATISLAVA 494

[1](#)E. BRATISLAVA 491

Classified By: Ambassador Rodolphe M. Vallee for Reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

[1](#)1. (U) SUMMARY: Smer's Robert Fico has said that preliminary coalition talks will end by this Friday, when he will start official negotiations for the new GOS. Smer is expected to invite two other parties to be in coalition some time tomorrow (June 28). SMK, SNS, and HZDS all were invited for a second round of discussions with Smer today, while KDH has been given extra time for its own intra-party discussions. The tide has continued to turn since the June 17 elections: last week a Smer-KDH-SMK coalition held much potential, but now it looks that KDH is out of the game. As of today, it appears that coalitions with SMK-HZDS or SNS-HZDS are Smer's top choices. END SUMMARY.

KDH NO LONGER CONSIDERED A LIKELY - NOR RELIABLE - PARTNER  
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[1](#)2. (C) KDH is holding its own intra-party discussions today and is expected to meet with Smer tomorrow. Jaro Daniska, an assistant to KDH Deputy Chairman and MP Vladimir Palko, told us that he believed the party would stay in opposition rather than join a coalition with Smer.

[1](#)3. (C) Even if KDH wanted to join a coalition, Smer might not want it anyway. Smer MP and presidium member Peter Pelegrini told us that KDH is no longer considered a likely -- nor reliable -- partner, as a result of divisions within the party over coalition talks.

ALTHOUGH SMK PREFERS KDH, IT MAY HAVE TO SETTLE FOR HZDS  
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[1](#)4. (C) After a second round of negotiations with Smer today, SMK is still in the running to join the governing coalition. SMK MP Laszlo Nagy told us that his party had not yet received any official offers, but he expected Smer to announce its decision as early as tonight, at which point the SMK leadership would make its own decision. Although SMK prefers a coalition that includes KDH, Nagy does not consider KDH a likely partner anymore. Instead, he expects his party to join a government that includes HZDS. We asked Nagy if SMK would ever join a Smer-SNS coalition, to which he replied, "Probably not." (Comment: Never say never. End comment.)

SMER WON'T LET SNS OR HZDS "TRAUMATIZE SOCIETY"  
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15. (C) Smer's Pelegrini told us that like SMK, his party would prefer a KDH-SMK coalition; however, a coalition with SNS and HZDS now appears more likely. Nonetheless, Smer will do "everything possible" not to "traumatize society." This includes keeping both Meciar and Slota out of government positions, not pardoning previous crimes or corrupt politicians, and not allowing those politicians to return to political and public life. Smer's main goal is to create a "stable government with no traumas to entrepreneurs or to citizens."

SNS AND HZDS GET COCKY  
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16. (U) SNS leader Jan Slota told press this morning that he did not think SMK would be invited into coalition with Smer. He would not say whether or not he and Fico had reached any agreements, yet he was confident that some sort of decision would be made by Friday.

17. (C) HZDS emerged seemingly optimistic from talks with Smer this morning. Deputy Chairman and MP Milan Urbani told us today that it seemed sure that HZDS would be in government with Smer, although Meciar would not hold a post in the cabinet. Meciar himself told press following the meeting that he would not accept any "constitutional position" in the government. He also noted that he wanted to keep KDH out of the government. If included in a coalition, HZDS would want the ministries of regional development -- which would likely go to Urbani -- and possibly defense.

SDKU IS OUT OF THE GAME  
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18. (C) SDKU appears to be out of the running as a potential coalition partner for Smer. A Smer MP told us that Dzurinda had ruined any possibility of a coalition between the two parties when he had approached Fico in preliminary talks, "as if he were in charge," and offered Fico inclusion in a coalition, as if it were his to offer.

19. (U) Dzurinda noted in a press conference this afternoon that a three plus one rightist coalition with HZDS would be the best solution for Slovakia for three reasons: first, it would ensure a continuity of reforms; second, three of the members belong to the European People's Party (EPP) and one (HZDS) is in waiting for acceptance; and third, this coalition would be the most stable of all options, as it would be an equal partnership, unlike in the case of a leftist coalition. Dzurinda would not reject the possibility of ever joining in coalition with Fico, but he did tell press to "look at Germany and Merkel versus Schroeder before elections, no more comment..." He also rejected the possibility of his personally resigning in the interest of bring the "good" coalition together, saying that his party had done well, and there was no reason for him to quit.

FOREIGN DIPLOMATS WONDER IF THEY SHOULD INTERVENE  
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10. (C) The British Ambassador and DCM mentioned to our Ambassador and DCM that European embassies in Bratislava have been discussing whether or not to try to express to Smer their views of SNS and HZDS in a potential GOS. They said that no European parties or countries have yet done so. DCM noted that we had passed informal messages to the parties but would not formally intervene. The British may advocate doing so with the other EU embassies. (Comment: It is probably too late for their comments to have an effect on Smer's decision. End comment.)

VALLEE